

Murray Mayor's Message for March 2017

March is the month of St. Patrick's Day, the holiday best known for parades, shamrocks, leprechauns, and all things green. It's also the time of year that we start to look forward to our lawns and gardens turning back to green as spring approaches.

In Utah, water is a valuable resource that is easy to take for granted. Utah is the second driest state in the nation, yet we are the highest water user per person. This year especially, all you need to do is look at the surrounding mountains to realize that water availability is going to be limited.

The Utah Legislature recently enacted a law that has an impact on all Murray water users. The law requires retail water providers to establish an increasing rate structure for drinking water. Known as "tiered-pricing," the law requires customers who use more water to pay higher rates than those who use less. Many believe this tiered-pricing structure provides financial incentives for customers to conserve water.

Within Murray's boundaries are three water providers: Murray City, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, and Salt Lake City Public Utilities. Salt Lake City has been using a tiered-pricing structure for several years. This year Murray City and Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District will implement a tiered-pricing structure. This may come as a surprise to some customers who use a significant amount of water. To learn more about the tiered structure, visit the Public Works section of our website at www.murray.utah.gov.

According to the Utah Division of Water Resources, 60% of our water use is for outdoor watering, and a typical Utah household will use twice as much water outside as necessary. Conservation of water is not only an economic issue, but more importantly is necessary to stretch our water supply to meet the needs of our growing population.

We are fortunate to have the robust and clean water systems that serve our city. I was recently in South America in an area where tap water can't be used for drinking or even brushing teeth, without first being filtered and boiled. I felt enormous gratitude for our efficient, clean water system and the competent people who maintain it.

I encourage all residents and businesses to start now to conserve and become water wise not only to minimize the surprise of the new rate structure this summer, but because it's the right thing to do. There are great water conservation tips available from Utah Division of Water Resources (conservewater.utah.gov), Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (jvwcd.org) and the Murray City website.